



No. 109 Rs. 3.50

Tachcholi **OTHENAN**



C.M. Vitankar

A LEGENDARY HERO OF KERALA

The story of Othenan is the story of the heroes of Malabar of the 14th and 15th centuries, because as the legends and the ballads would have it, he was the most heroic of them all. The ballads known as the "Vadakkan Pattukal" still form the repertoire of songs of the peasants and labourers of Malabar. They sing of the feudal society, its barons and its villoins, its gory codes and its glorious men and women.

Those were the times when "Kalari Payattu" had reached its zenith. Though gunpowder was not unknown, a lithe body and a skilled sword were the chief assets of a soldier and a man was proclaimed by his martial prowess. If he was quick to take offence, he was quick in settling it at the point of his sword. It was this society of feuds and duels that Othenan had stalked like a giant in his time.

Othenan's society was a matrilineal one. It gave women a status equal to men's. The women used it and were heard with respect in all matters — martial as well as marital. Romance feeds on such worlds and the ballads abound in their "braves" and "fairs". Othenan's conquests in this realm are as enviable as in the battlefields. Yet he was no Casanova because never did he violate discipline in any of his actions.

The impetuous Othenan was ever-obedient to his elder brother, Koma Kurup. God-fearing and low-obiding, he fought for just causes as sanctioned by the times and traditions.

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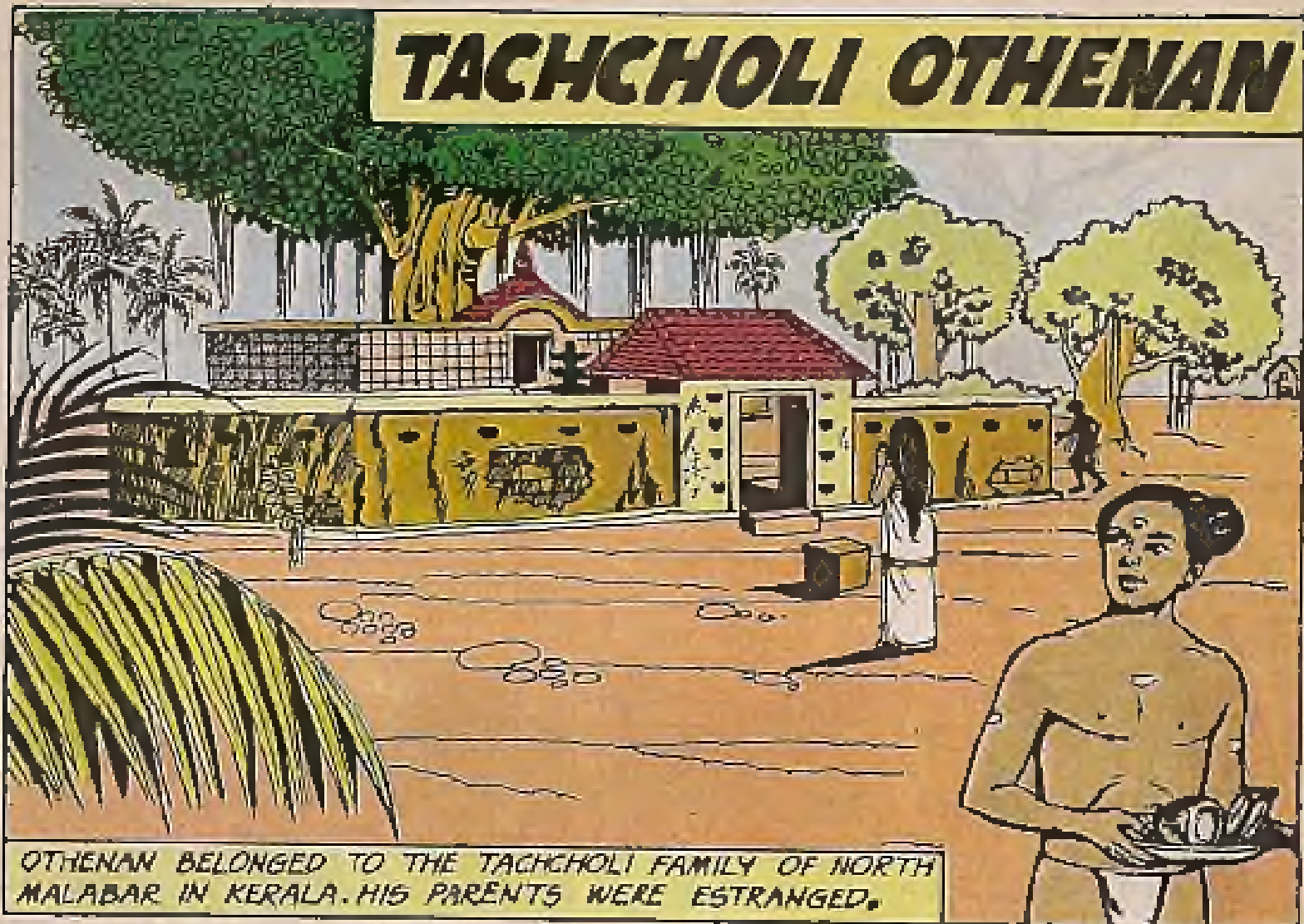
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TACHCHOLI OTHENAN



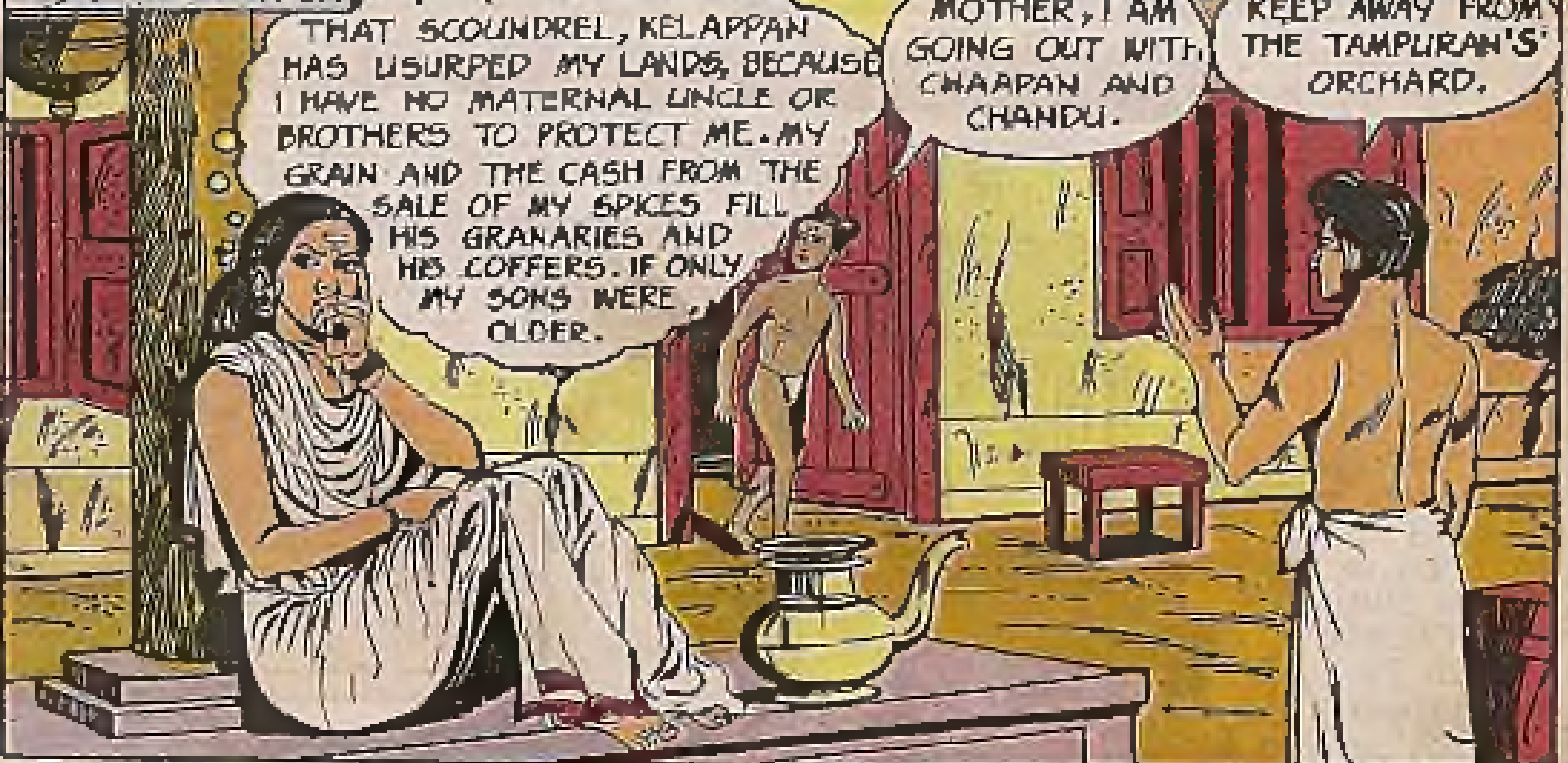
OTHENAN BELONGED TO THE TACHCHOLI FAMILY OF NORTH MALABAR IN KERALA. HIS PARENTS WERE ESTRANGED.

HE LIVED WITH HIS MOTHER AND HIS ELDER BROTHER IN THEIR HUMBLE HOMESTEAD. HIS MOTHER HAD NO BROTHERS* SO TIMES WERE DIFFICULT FOR THE FAMILY.

THAT SCOUNDREL, KELAPPAN HAS USURPED MY LANDS, BECAUSE I HAVE NO MATERNAL UNCLE OR BROTHERS TO PROTECT ME. MY GRAIN AND THE CASH FROM THE SALE OF MY SPIKES FILL HIS GRANARIES AND HIS COFFERS. IF ONLY MY SONS WERE OLDER.

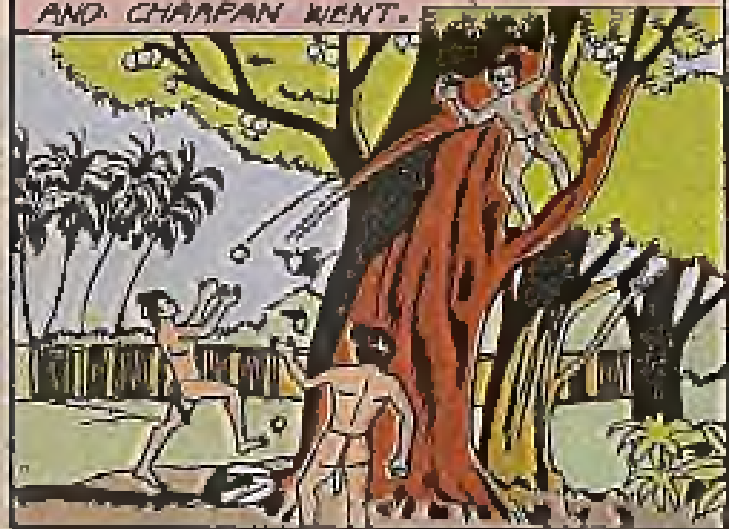
MOTHER, I AM GOING OUT WITH CHAAPPAN AND CHANDU.

KEEP AWAY FROM THE TAMPURAN'S ORCHARD.

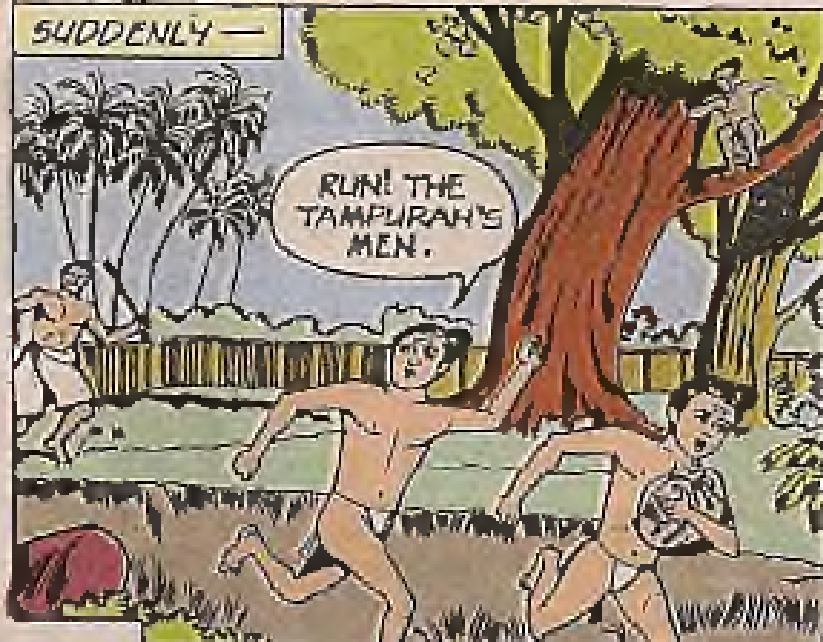


*IN THE MATRILINEAL SOCIETY TO WHICH OTHENAN BELONGED, THE MATERNAL UNCLE AND NOT THE FATHER MAINTAINED THE CHILDREN. **A FEUDAL BARON.

BUT THAT WAS EXACTLY WHERE
OTHENAN AND HIS COMPANIONS, CHANDU
AND CHARPAN WENT.



SUDDENLY —



THE OTHERS GOT AWAY BUT OTHENAN WAS
CAUGHT.

LET ME GO!
LET ME GO!

WE WILL, WHEN
WE REACH THE
TAMPURAN'S HOUSE



THEY DRAGGED THE STRUGGLING
OTHENAN ...



... AND TOOK
HIM TO THE
TAMPURAN.



SIR, HE WAS
STEALING
MANGOES. WE
CAUGHT HIM
WITH GREAT
DIFFICULTY.
HE IS TOUGH.

WHAT! IT TOOK
THREE OF YOU TO
CATCH HIM. HE WILL
BE A THREAT TO US
WHEN HE GROWS
UP. HE MUST BE
HANGED.

MEANWHILE, CHANDU AND CHAAPAN CARRIED THE NEWS TO OTHENAN'S FATHER.

THE GOOD-FOR-NOTHING BOY. HERE, TAKE THIS GOLD TO THE TAMPURAN AND BUY HIS RELEASE.



OTHENAN WAS FREED. BUT HE SEETHED WITH HUMILIATION.

THE BULLIES! I SHAL! SPECIALIZE IN PAYATTU* AND BEAT THEM ALL.

WE'LL HELP YOU!



AND THEY MADE THEIR WAY HOMEWARDS.

OTHENAN, IS THAT YOU? WILL YOU TAKE ME TO THE TEMPLE?

I WILL, MOTHER. CHANDU AND CHAAPAN CAN COME WITH US.



AT THE TEMPLE, SHE SUDDENLY BEGAN TO SWAY AND LOST HER BALANCE.

OTHENAN! I AM POSSESSED BY THE SPIRIT OF BHAGAWATI. I AM ABOUT TO DIE. TRUST IN THE GODDESS AND ALL WILL GO WELLS WITH YOU.



AND OTHENAN'S MOTHER FELL DEAD.

OTHENAN AND HIS BROTHER, KOMA KURUP, WITH THE HELP OF CHANDU AND CHAAPAN, PERFORMED THE LAST RITES AND CREMATED HER.

WITH MOTHER GONE AND NO MATERNAL UNCLER, WE ARE NOW ORPHANS. FATHER SHOULD HAVE COME FOR THIS AT LEAST.



THAT ONAM, OTHENAN DECIDED TO GO TO HIS FATHER'S HOUSE, AS USUAL, FOR HIS RIGHTFUL SHARE OF THE FAMILY GIFTS.

DON'T GO! HE MIGHT INSULT YOU.

I MUST GO. PLEASE LET ME GO.



KOMA KURUP RELUCTANTLY AGREED.

AS KOMA KURUP HAD EXPECTED, OTHENAN WAS GIVEN A RUDE RECEPTION.

I HAVE COME, FATHER.

YOU MAY COLLECT A MUNDU**AND FOUR MEASURES OF RICE AS ANYBODY ELSE.



OTHENAN SPURNED THE RICE AND TORE THE MUNDU TO SHREDS.

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE TO EXPECT ANY SPECIAL TREATMENT?

A MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF TACHCHOLI!



THE HARVEST FESTIVAL OF KERALA, WHEN SPECIAL GIFTS ARE GIVEN BY A MAN TO HIS WIFE AND CHILDREN AND THEIR ACCEPTANCE IS PERMITTED BY THE WIFE'S FAMILY. ** A PIECE OF CLOTH SIMILAR TO A LUNDI, USED BY MEN AND WOMEN OF KERALA ALIKE.

SUDDENLY, THERE WAS A COMMOTION INSIDE THE HOUSE. THE SPIRIT OF BHAGAWATI HAD COME TO AVENGE THE INDULT TO HER DEVOTEE'S SON.



AS HE TURNED HOMEWARDS, OTHENAN MADE UP HIS MIND ABOUT THE FUTURE.

NO UNCLES; AN INDIFFERENT FATHER; A PEACE-LOVING BROTHER; I WILL HAVE TO RELY ON MYSELF TO REGAIN THE WEALTH OF THE FAMILY.

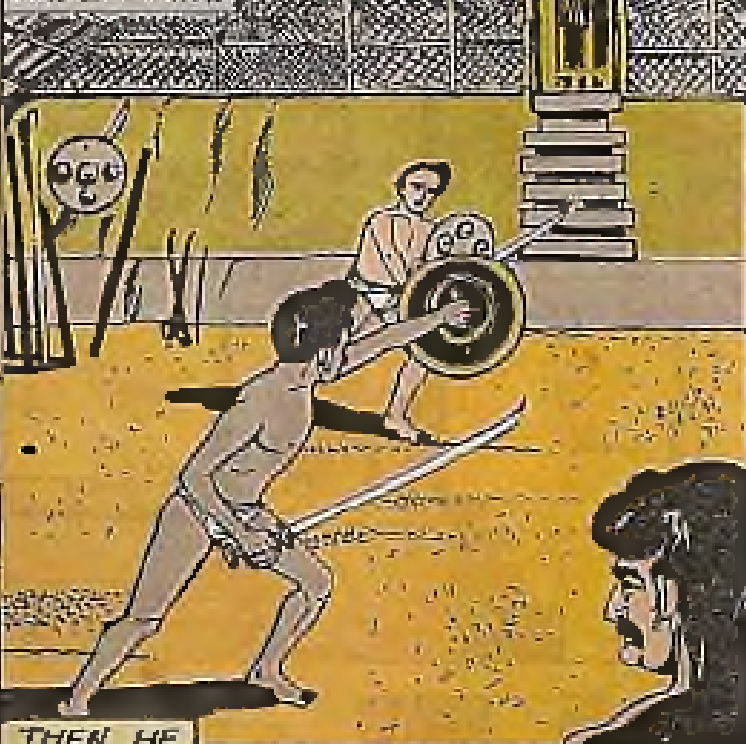


HE HAD SUDDENLY GROWN UP.

A FEW DAYS LATER, WITH KOMA KURUP'S CONSENT AND BHAGAWATI'S BLESSINGS, OTHENAN MADE HIS WAY WITH CHANDU TO CHERAYI PANIKKER TO STUDY PAYATTU.

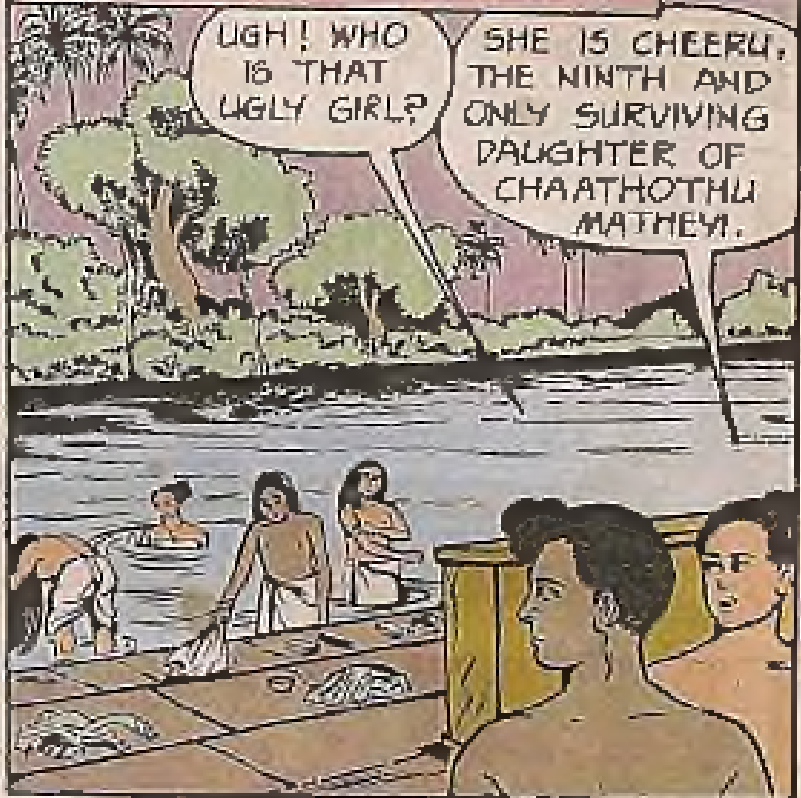


FOR TWO YEARS HE TRAINED UNDER HIM.



THEN HE RETURNED TO HIS VILLAGE AND BECAME A PUPIL OF MATHILOOR KURIKKAL.

ONE DAY, AS HE WAS RETURNING FROM THE KALARI** WITH CHANDU AND CHAPPAN, THEY PASSED A TANK.



OTHENAN SOON LEARNT ALL THERE WAS TO LEARN FROM MATHILOOR KURIKKAL.

NOW I AM A MASTER IN THE ART OF FIGHTING.

ONLY IN THE TECHNIQUES OF MALANADU, YOU STILL HAVE TO LEARN THOSE OF TULUNADU.



SO OTHENAN WENT TO RAMAPPAN OF TULUNADU WHO FOUND IN HIM AN EXCELLENT PUPIL.

HE IS A LAD OF COMPLETE CONTROL AND RIGID DISCIPLINE. HE IS AGILE AND NONE CAN LEAP AS HIGH. I SHALL TEACH HIM THE FATAL MARMAS.***

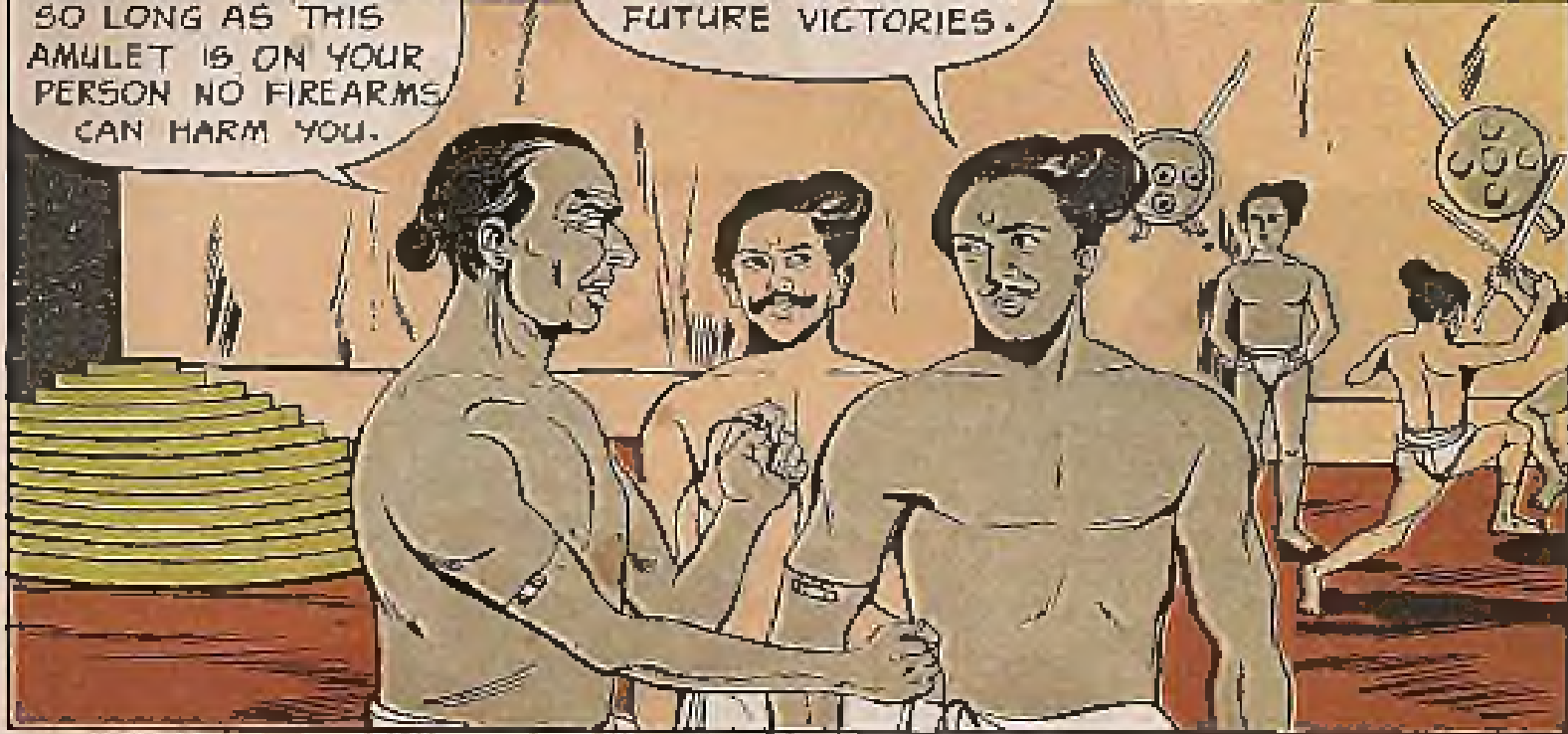


*BURN OR TEACHER. **GYMNASIUM WHERE PAYATTU IS TAUGHT. ***NERVE CENTRES BY TOUCHING WHICH AN EXPERT CAN KILL HIS OPPONENT.

EVEN THAT MOST DIFFICULT TECHNIQUE OF PAYATTU, OTHENAN MASTERED WITH EASE. RAMAPPAN WAS IMMENSELY PLEASED.

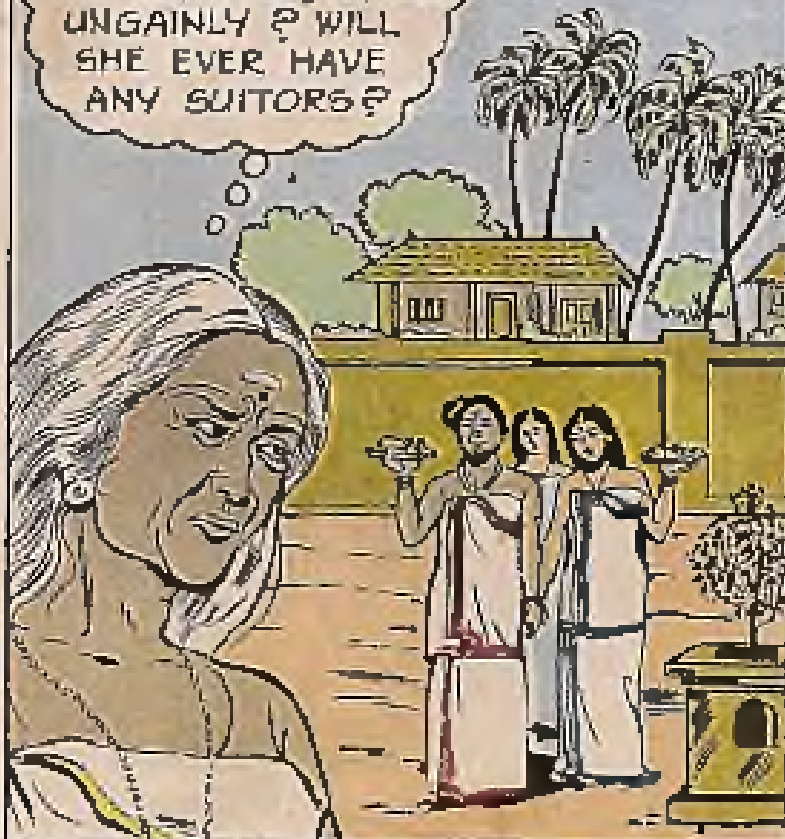
OTHENAN, I SHALL MAKE YOU INVINCIBLE. SO LONG AS THIS AMULET IS ON YOUR PERSON NO FIREARMS CAN HARM YOU.

TO YOU, O KURIKKAL, I DEDICATE ALL MY FUTURE VICTORIES.



MEANWHILE IN THE HOUSE OF CHAATHOTHU MATHEY! —

ALAS! WHY SHOULD CHEERU, THE ONLY ONE TO SURVIVE, BE SO UNGAINLY? WILL SHE EVER HAVE ANY SUITORS?



THE WORRIED MOTHER HAD CHEERU'S HOROSCOPE READ.

THE BEST MATCH FOR HER WOULD BE THACHCHOLI OTHENAN. YOU SHOULD SPEAK TO KOMA KURUP RIGHT AWAY.

TACHCHOLI OTHENAN!



MATHEYI WAS NOT ONE TO ACT IN HASTE.

OTHENAN WOULD NEVER AGREE IF HE SAW CHEERU. WHILE HE IS AWAY SPECIALISING IN PAYATTU, I SHALL DO WHAT I CAN FOR CHEERU.



THEN SHE SENT FOR SPECIAL AYURVEDIC HERBS AND BEGAN A SERIES OF BEAUTY TREATMENT SESSIONS FOR THE GIRL.



AND CHEERU SOON BECAME ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL GIRLS IN THE LAND. ONE DAY —

OTHENAN IS BACK FROM TULU-NADU. I SHALL APPROACH KOMA KURUP.



KOMA KURUP WAS DELIGHTED BY THE PROPOSAL.

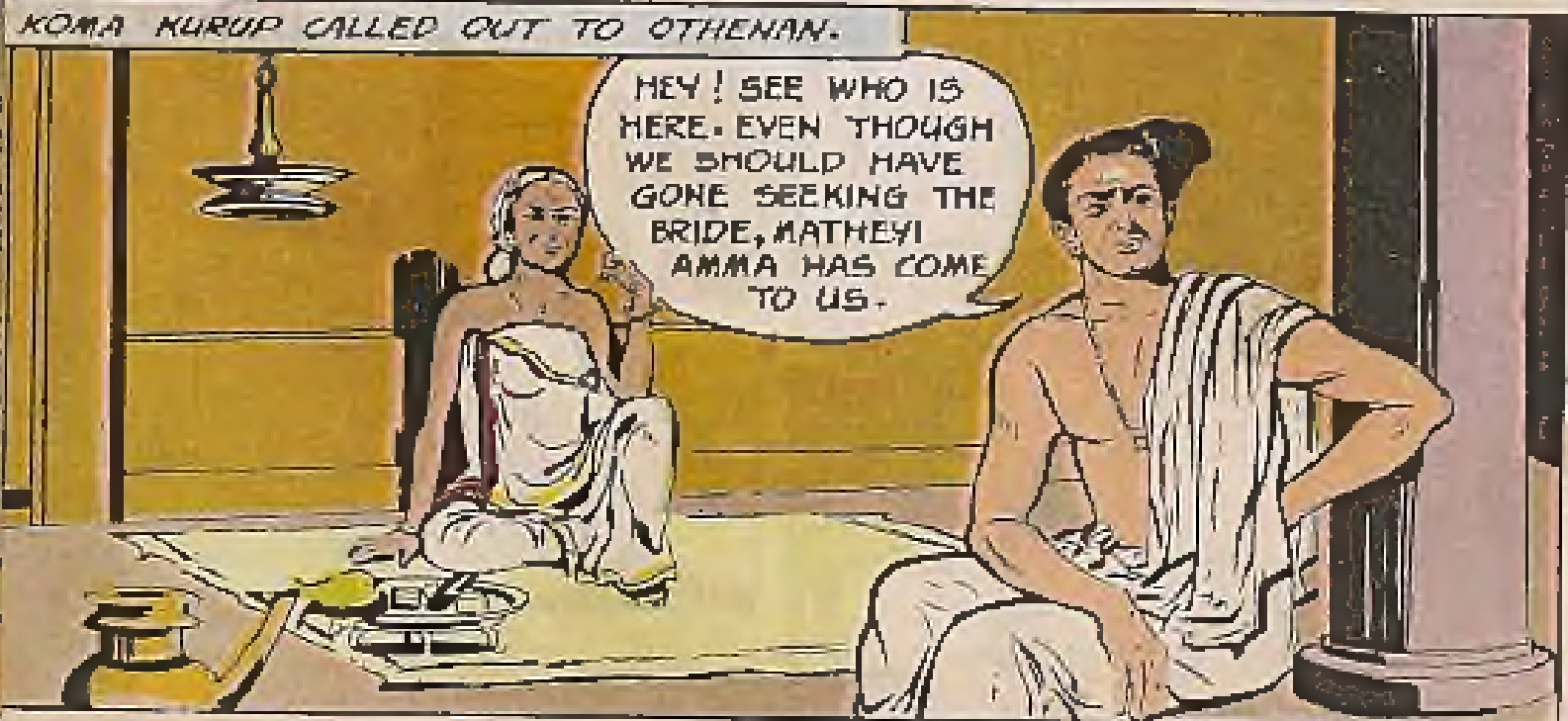


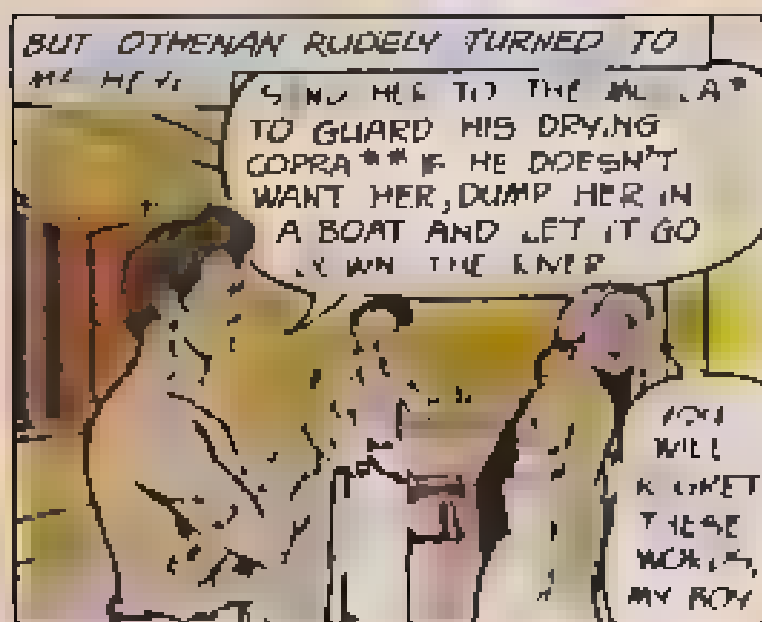
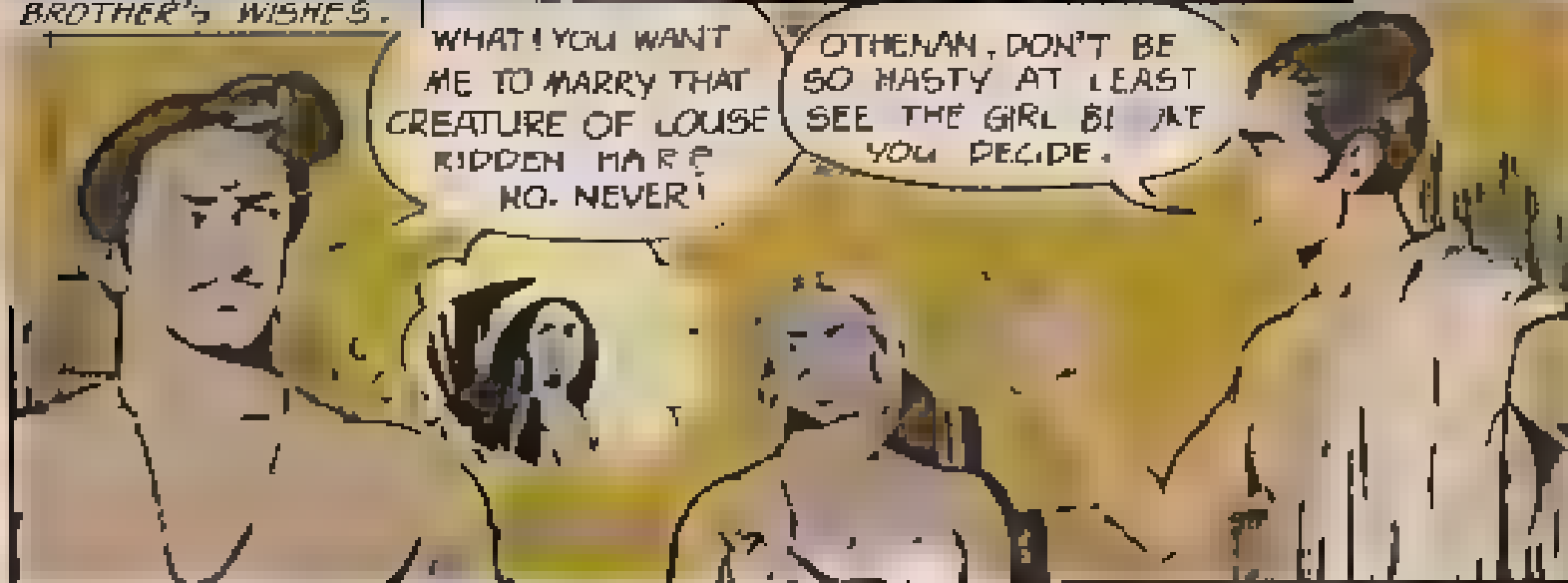
WHY NOT? IT WOULD BE AN HONOUR FOR BOTH FAMILIES.



KOMA KURUP CALLED OUT TO OTHENAN.

HEY! SEE WHO IS HERE. EVEN THOUGH WE SHOULD HAVE GONE SEEKING THE BRIDE, MATHEYI AMMA HAS COME TO US.





AS THE FIRST STEP IN WOODING HER,
OTHENAN SENT CHAAPAN TO HER WITH
A REQUEST FOR PAN.

TELL YOUR FRIEND
I HAVE NO PAN,
BECAUSE I HAVE
JUST RETURNED
FROM MY DUTIES
AT THE MOPLA'S
(KKA YARD)

O-O-OH! SO
SHE IS GOING
TO BE
DIFFICULT!



MATHEVI RETURNED, HUMILIATED BUT
OTHENAN WAS OBSESSED BY HER.

FOR THE SAKE OF HIS BROTHER, KOMA
HE SENT MATHEVI TO MATHEVI.

YOU ARE TOO LATE
I TOOK YOUR
BROTHER'S ADVICE
AND HAVE SENT
HER TO WORK
FOR THE MOPLA



LATER CHAAPAN CAME TO OTHENAN

DONT WORRY
CHAAPAN
I WILL
LISTEN

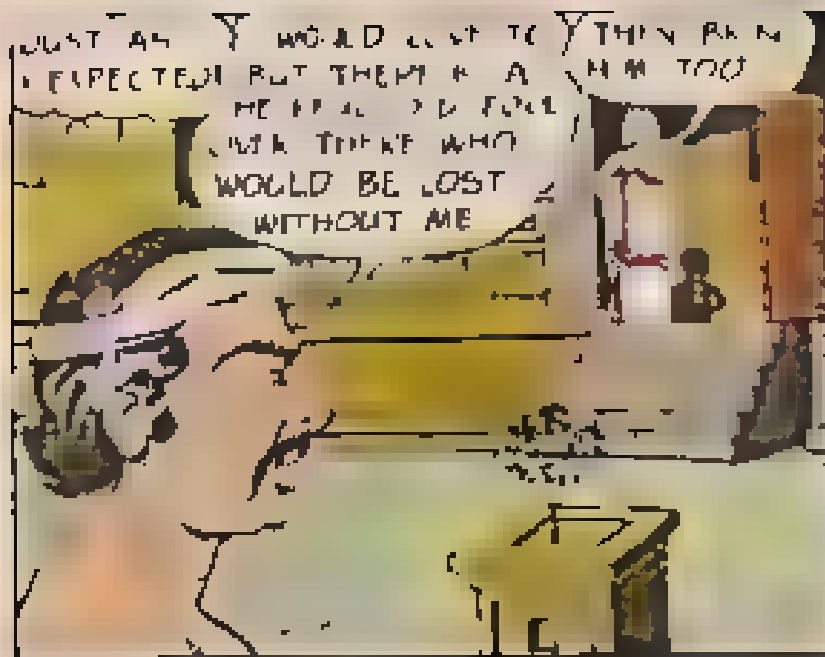


WENT TO MATHEVI.

ALL I WANT IS
OF YOUR HAND
HEATHEN UP AND
THROWN ME OUT.

POOR MAN IT'S
NOT YOUR HAND
WILL MAY BE
HERE IF YOU LIKE
WELL A MAN I
MANAGE MY
ESTATES





MEANWHILE, THE NOTORIOUS UPSTART, KELAPPAN OF FORT PORMAPURAM, HAD KIDNAPPED KUNHI NANNI, THE DAUGHTER OF A NEIGHBOURING CHIEFTAIN.



OTHENAN'S FAME AS A FIGHTER REACHED THE CHIEFTAIN'S EARS.

I SHALL SEND WORD TO OTHENAN TO RESCUE MY DAUGHTER.



WHEN THE APPEAL REACHED OTHENAN, KOMA KURUP WAS WITH HIM.

IT IS THE SAME SCOUNDREL WHO USURPED OUR LANDS.

THEN I MUST FIGHT HIM AND TAKE WHAT HE HAS ILLEGALLY GRABBED.



BUT KELAPPAN'S FORT IS IMPREGNABLE.

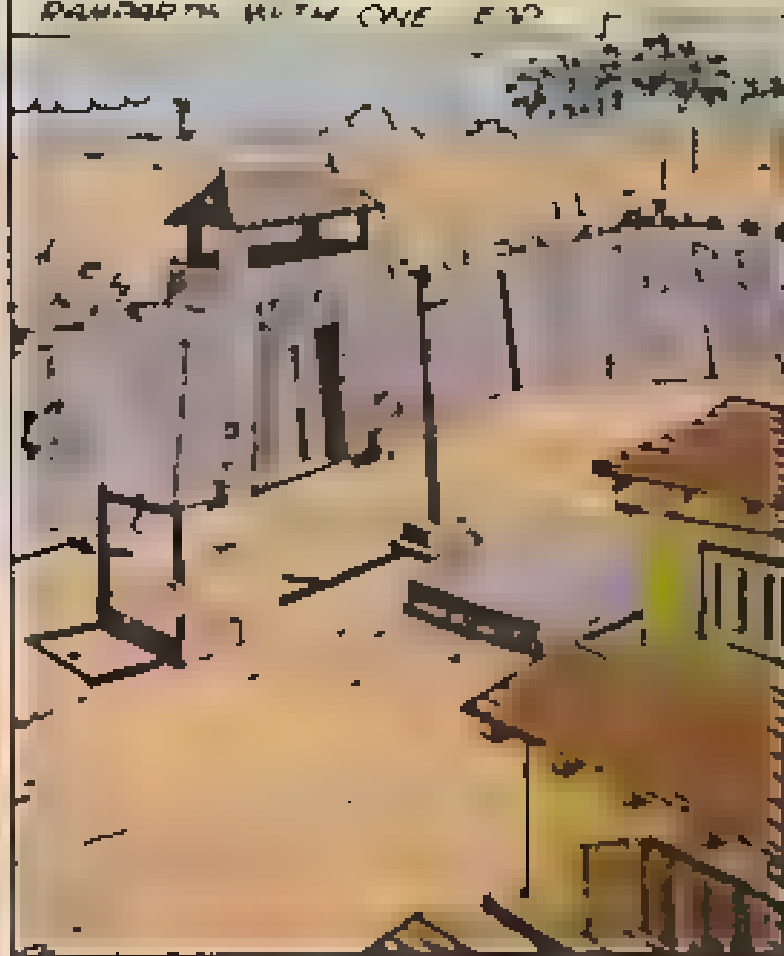
NEVER MIND. KELAPPAN IS NO MATCH FOR ME. BESIDES MINE IS A JUST CAUSE, I'LL TAKE CHAAPPAN WITH ME.



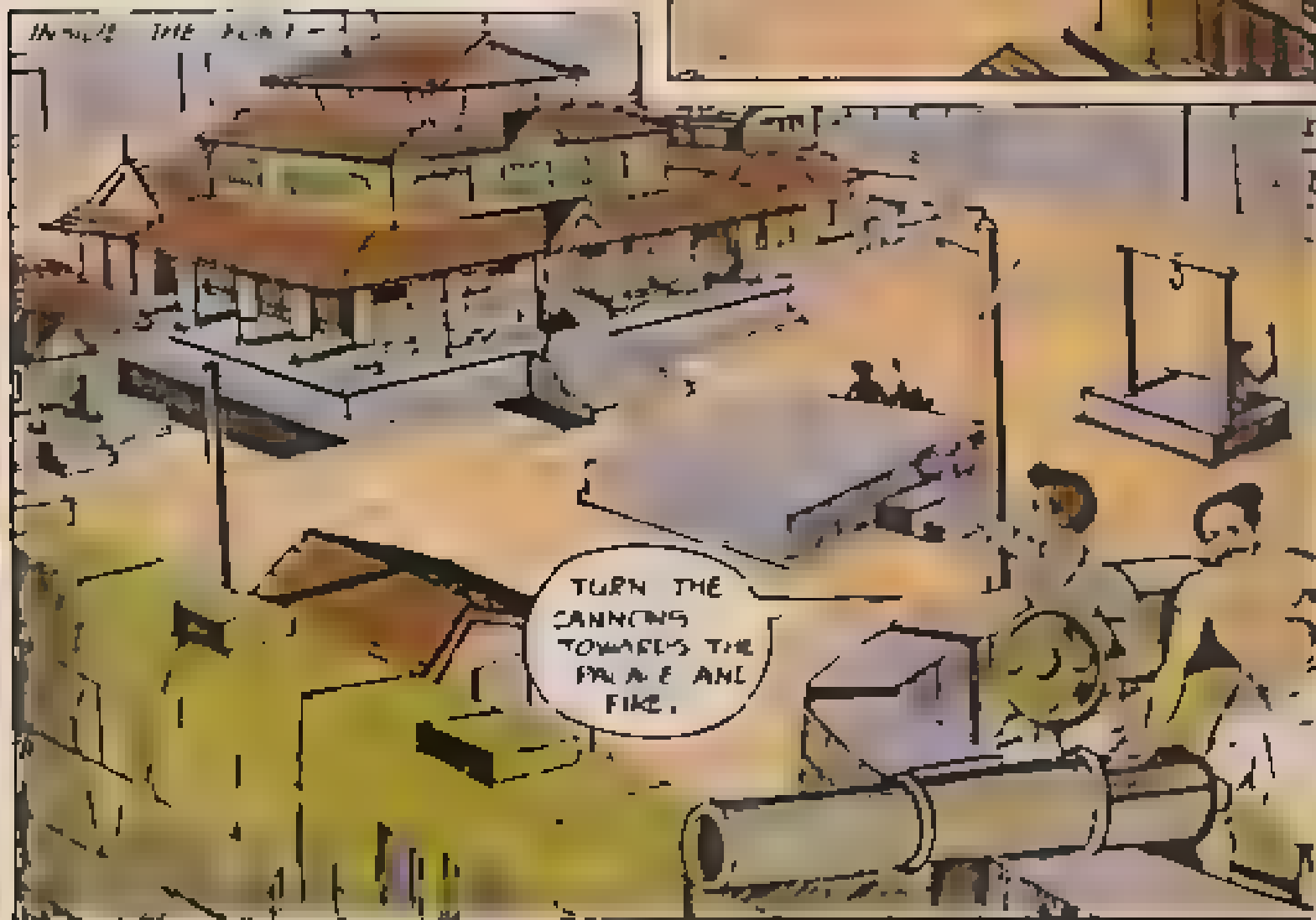
SO OTHENAN AND TACHOHOL WENT
FOR THE FORT.

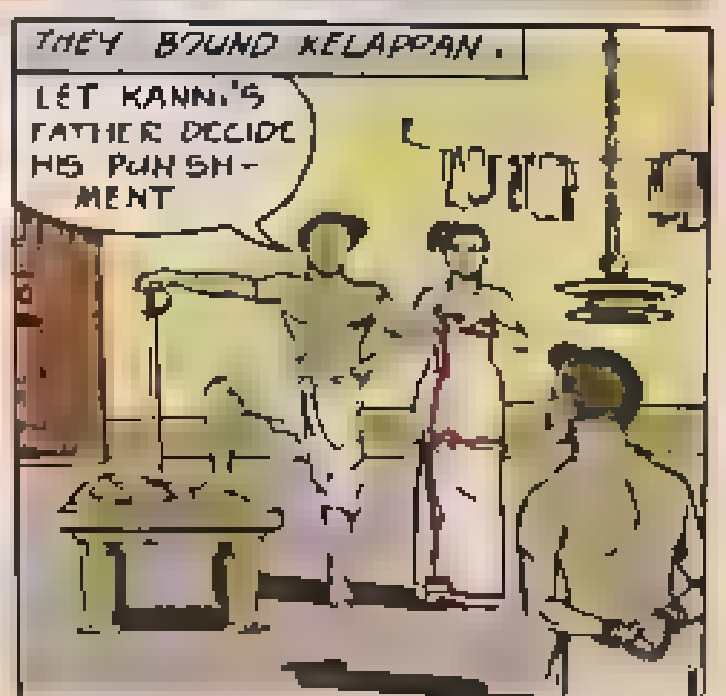
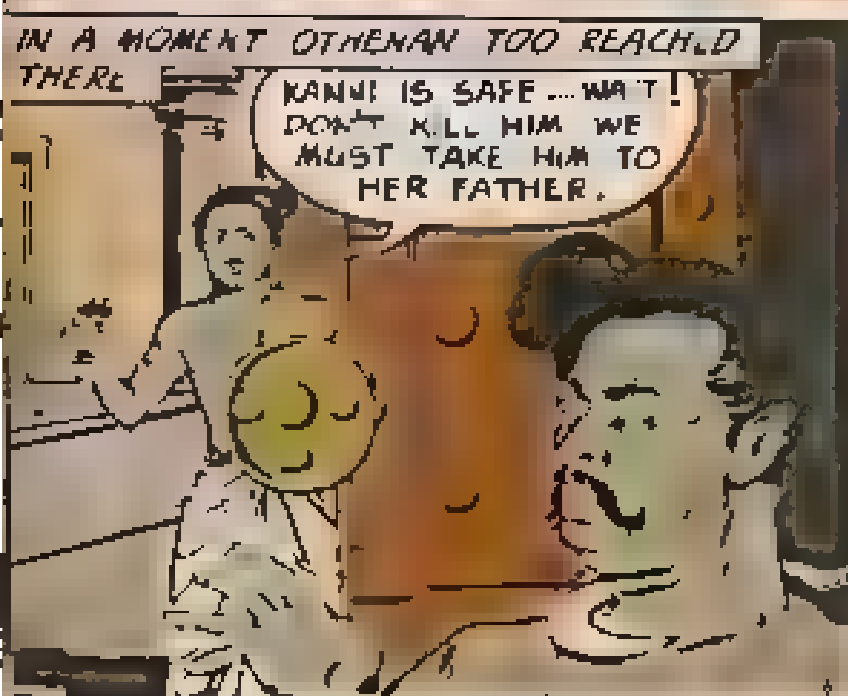
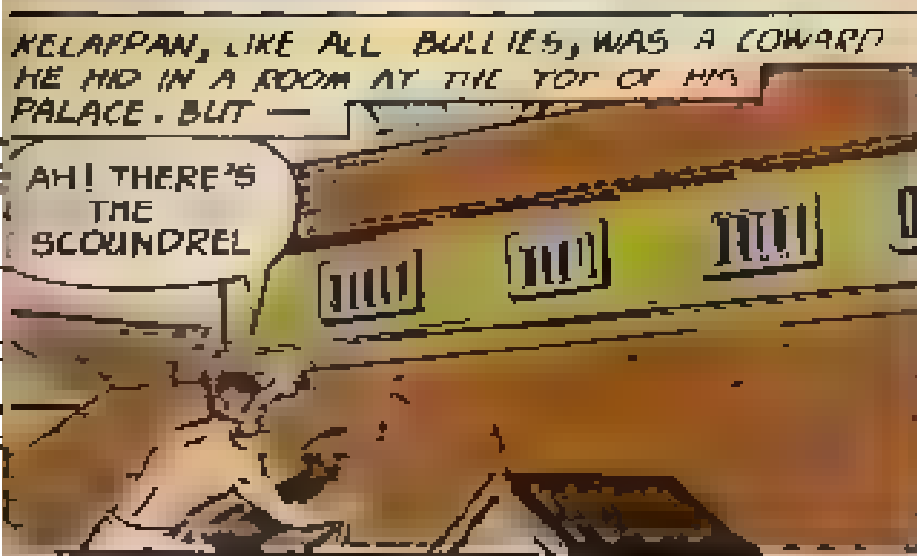


REACHING THE FORT, THEY WENT TO ITS
GATE WITH ONE END.



IN THE FORT -





ON THE WAY OUT, OTHENAN SAW
KELADAN'S NAME ENGRAVED ON
THE FLAGPOLE IN FRONT OF
THE PALACE



CHADAN, A RAI
OF A MAN'S NAME
FROM THE FLAG
POLE AND LET
THE NAME OF
THE HOUSE OF
TACHCHOLI
REPLACE IT.



LATER, WHEN THEY HANDED KELADAN
OVER TO THE OLD CHIEFTAIN —



I CONDEMN
YOU TO THE
GALLOWS

THEN THE CHIEFTAIN, WHO WAS FULL OF GRATITUDE AND ADMIRATION FOR
OTHENAN, TURNED TO HIM.

HONOUR US BY
ACCEPTING
KANNI AS
YOUR WIFE



OTHERWAY - IS THE THE VICE AND IF HE IS WITH THE F...
...A. FROM AND TO A BUREAU IN A LATE LATE FAMILY
...AS THE WEATHER WE MAY THERE TO BECOME HERE.



MEANWHILE, KILAPPAN'S NEPHEW, KE. J. RETURNED FROM TULUNADU AFTER AN EXTENDED TRAINING IN PAKISTAN HERE. AS HE ENTERS THE FORT -

WHAT! THE NAME
OF TACHICOLI
ON THE FLAGPOLE!



ONE OF THE OLD GUARDS A MAN
FORWARD AND TOLD HIM (IF ANY)
THAT HAD HAPPENED.

SINCE THAT
DAY, WE TAKE
ORDERS FROM
OTHEMAN.

YOU WILL NOW TAKE
ORDERS FROM ME.
I AM NOT AFRAID OF
OTHENAN. HE KNOWS
NO TRICK WHICH
I DON'T. LET HIM
COME.



A FEW MARCHES, A K, THARRA WENT
TO SEE CHAAPAN FLEEING TO ARA.

CHECK ON YOUR
FORT AT PINNA
PUEAN



A FEW MARCHES WHEN THEY
REACHED THE FORT THEY FOUND
THE GATES CLOSED AS IT



OTHEVAN LEAF INSIDE



BUT CHAAPAN HESITATED.

WHY ARE THE GATES
BARRED? I THINK I'D
BETTER WAIT OUTSIDE.



MEANWHILE, NEAR THE FORT OTHEVAN WALKED UP TO THE PALACE.

ALL IS QUIET.
EVEN THE GUARDS
ARE ASLEEP.
I WON'T DISTURB
ANYBODY. I'LL
SIT AND WAIT
HERE FOR
CHAAPAN



BUT A ... THE ... THE ...
(THE ... THE ... THE ...)

AM I ...
ISN'T THIS ...
OTHER ...

2-2-1



MEANWHILE, CHANDAN HAD FOUND
LODGINGS IN A HUT NEAR BY. THE
NEXT MORNING HE HAD
RETURNED FROM THE TEMPLE,
FATIGUED

(THE MAN IS A
PRISONER IN THE
FORT AND WILL
BE HANGED THREE
DAYS FROM NOW)

(HMMM... THANK
GOD, I DIDN'T
FOLLOW HIM
INTO THE FORT)

CHAN ...
THE ...
THE ...



(CHANDAN RUSHED BACK TO KUMA
KURUP WITH THE NEWS)

YOU COLLECT
CHANDU, OUR
OTHER FRIENDS
AND THE ...
MEN AND COME
I'M HURRYING
BACK.



THE FIELD AND PICKED UP TWO WATER MELONS.

HE WENT TO

THE WICKED KELL
THIRSTS FOR BLOOD
BY GOD! YOU SHALL
QUENCH IT.



THEN, DISGUIISING HIMSELF AS A
SANYASI, CHAAPAN PROCEEDED
TO THE FORT.

BUT YOU
CAN'T ENTER.
MY MASTER'S
ORDERS.

I AM A MAN
OF GOD. LEAD
ME TO YOUR
MASTER.



THE GUARD, AFTER GETTING KELL'S
PERMISSION, LED CHAAPAN TO HIM.

TAKE THIS MELON
IT IS CONSECRATED.
YOUR FUTURE IS
BRIGHT BEFORE

SEE THAT YOUR
ENEMY IS IN YOUR
POWER SHOW HIM
NO MERCY

YOU TRULY ARE
A SEER. PLEASE
STAY WITH US
TILL TOMORROW
FOR, THEN
WILL I SEND THE
ENEMY TO THE
GALLIWS.



THE NEXT DAY —

YOU ARE MAGNANIMOUS
UNCHAN. THIS MAN LET
THIS CONSECRATED JUICE
BE HIS LAST DRINK.

AND LET MY
FRIEND BE STRONG
WITH THE HERBS
I HAVE MIXED
INTO IT.



FLATTERED, KELU GAVE HIS ASSENT.
OTHEANAN WAS UNCHAINED.

DRINK IT TO THE LEES AND FIND
YOUR WEAPON INSIDE.



IN A MATTER OF SECONDS, OTHEANAN
FOUND THE WEAPON AND —



AS SOON AS KELU AND HIS MEN RECOVERED FROM THE SHOCK, THEY SET
UPON CHAAPAN AND OTHEANAN.

HE IS A
FAKE.



THEY TALKED ABOUT A LOT OF THINGS BUT THEY WERE IN A GREAT HURRY

MARY IS AN OLD
MOM SHE'S HAD
BEEN HERE FOR 40
YEARS & SHE'S
APPEARED THEM

WE ARE
EXHAUSTED
IT'S
EXACTLY
ALL OF
OUR



MARY-
THANK YOU
THAT YOU
CAME

THE SIGHT OF HIS FRIENDS RENEWED
OTHENAN'S VIGOUR AND HE SOUGHT
OUT KELU FOR A DUEL



KELU WAS NO MATCH FOR OTHENAN.

I WILL NOT
KILL YOU I HAVE
OTHER PLANS
FOR YOU.



KELU'S MEN KIDNAPPED OTHENAN CALLED THE GUARD WHO HAD INFORMED
ON HIM.

NOW YOU
HANG HIM.



OTHENAN WAS ONLY TWENTY TWO YEARS OLD IN THE NEXT EVENTFUL DECADE
OTHENAN FOUGHT AND VANQUISHED MANY TYRANTS OF THE TIME
SPREAD AND HE BECAME A MUCH-SOUGHT
AFTER SUITOR.



NONGAMMA, A KINSWOMAN OF PURAMALA KURUP, HAD ONE OF THE HOPEFULS

AM SURE MY PRAYERS WILL BE ANSWERED. ONE DAY OTHENAN WILL WED ME



MEANWHILE OTHENAN APPROACHED HIS BROTHER -

I WANT TO MAKE A GOLD HILT FOR MY SWORD.

GOLD IS HARD TO COME BY. YEARS AGO I HAD PAID UP MY DUES FOR A GOLD KURI* STARTED BY PURAMALA KURUP. WHEN IT WAS MY TURN TO RECEIVE THE GOLD HE CHEATED ME OF IT



THE NEXT MORNING SAN OTHENAN AND CHAPPAN WITH THEIR SWORDS AND SHIELDS AT PURAMALA KURUP'S HOUSE

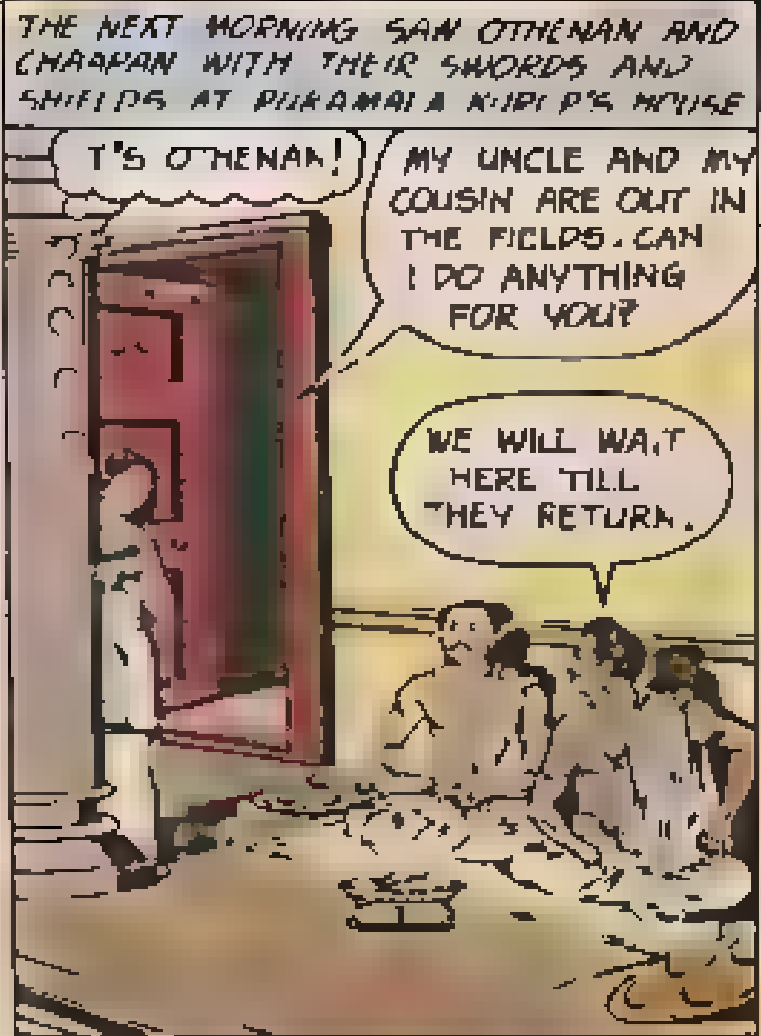
IT'S OTHENAN!

MY UNCLE AND MY COUSIN ARE OUT IN THE FIELDS. CAN I DO ANYTHING FOR YOU?

WE WILL WAIT HERE TILL THEY RETURN.



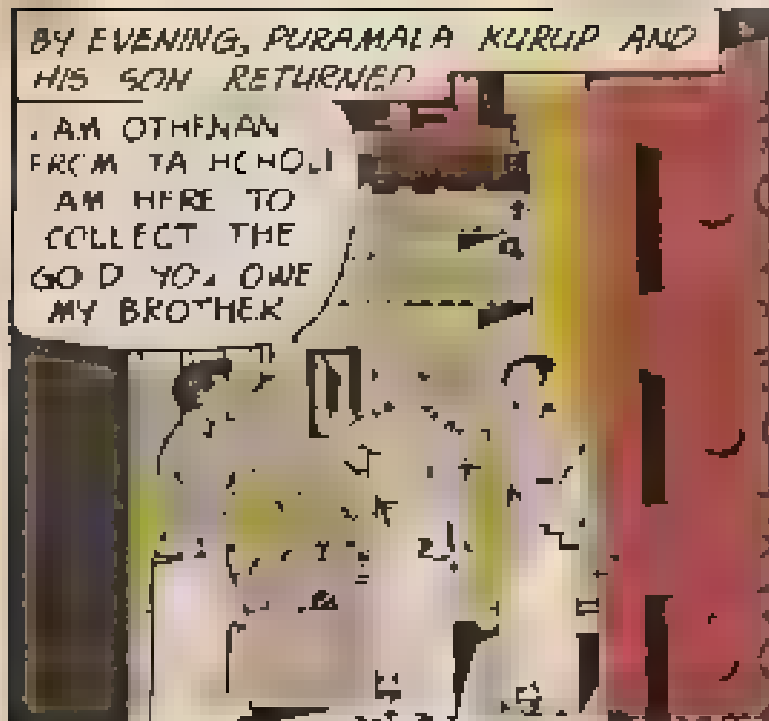
OTHENAN NEEDED NO FURTHER PROMPTING



* A POOLING OF FUNDS BY INDIVIDUALS WITH PERIODIC DRAWN EQUAL TO A SHIT FUND.

BY EVENING, PURAMALA KURUP AND HIS SON RETURNED

AN OTHENAN FROM TA HCHOLI AM HERE TO COLLECT THE GOD YOU OWE MY BROTHER



WITHOUT 40 MAMM AS LUCKY, A HIND THE FATHER AND SON WALKED INDOORS

FATHER, WE HAD BETTER PAY UP. OTHENAN IS DANGEROUS

HIS MIGHT HAS BEEN EXAGGERATED AND THE KURI IS AN OLD STORY.



AT NIGHT WHEN THE SERVANT CAME OUT AND CLOSED THE DOORS —

WHEN WILL YOUR MASTER COME OUT?

BUT UNTIL TOMORROW HE HAS GONE TO BED



OTHENAN PUSHED THE SERVANT ASIDE



AND IS RIDING INTO PURAMALA KURUP'S BEDROOM, AWAKE HIM





KURUP
GET OUT OF
MY HOUSE

I W WASH YOU UP
BE THE CHILD THAT'S
NOT THE CHILD THAT'S



IF YOU ARE ITCHING
FOR A FIGHT, I'M
WILLING. BUT, WARN
YOU, IT WILL BE
YOUR LAST FIGHT.



BUT KURUP'S AGE WAS AGAINST HIM
AND IT BECAME HIS LAST FIGHT



THEN THE IRATE SON JUMPED INTO
THE FRAY. OTHERMAN TRIED TO STOP
HIM.

YOU HAVE YEARS
OF LIFE AHEAD OF
ME. DON'T TAKE
MY LIFE

BUT THE SON WAS RASH
AND RAISED HIS SWORD.

WHAT SHALL WE CAN'T LEAVE
WE DO WITH HER BEHIND IN

MY
PRAYERS
HAVE
BEEN
ANSWERED.

WILL HAVE TO
TAKE HER
WITH US.

BACK AT HOME, UNAWARE OF HER
FEELINGS, OTHENAN LEFT HER
ALONE. AFTER MANY IDLE DAYS AT
TACHOLI —

I AM TREATED LIKE
A QUEEN. BUT I CANNOT
BE A BURDEN ON THESE
PEOPLE ANY LONGER

TO MAKE HERSELF USEFUL SHE
BEGAN CUTTING GRASS FOR
THE CATTLE. ONE DAY —

IS THIS THE WAY TO
TREAT A FINE LADY
AFTER KILLING HER
KITH AND KIN? THE
BOOR OTHENAN HAS

OTHENAN'S ENEMIES TOOK
EXAGGERATED VERSIONS OF
NONGAMMA'S STORY TO THE
YOUNG TAMPURAN.
HE WAS FURIOUS.

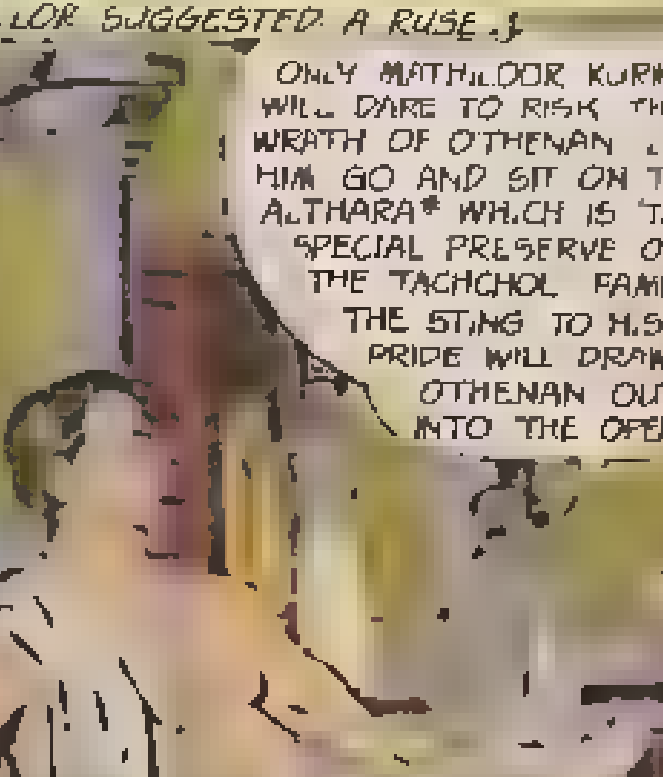
ARREST OTHENAN
AND BRING HIM

CHAAPAN LEARNT OF THIS AND WARNED OTHEMAN

ONLY NINGAM MA'S STATEMENT CAN CLEAR YOU. TILL IT IS HEARD, LIE LOW, IN DISGUISE.

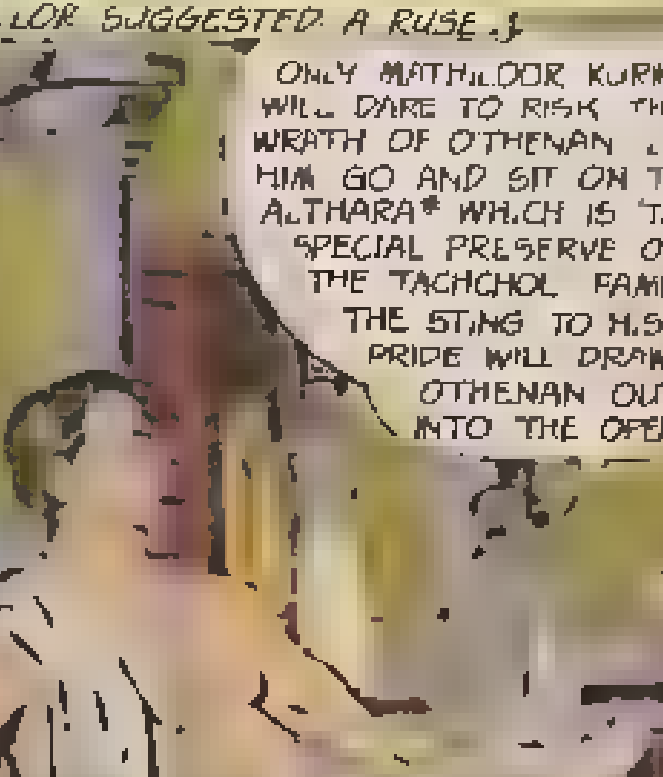
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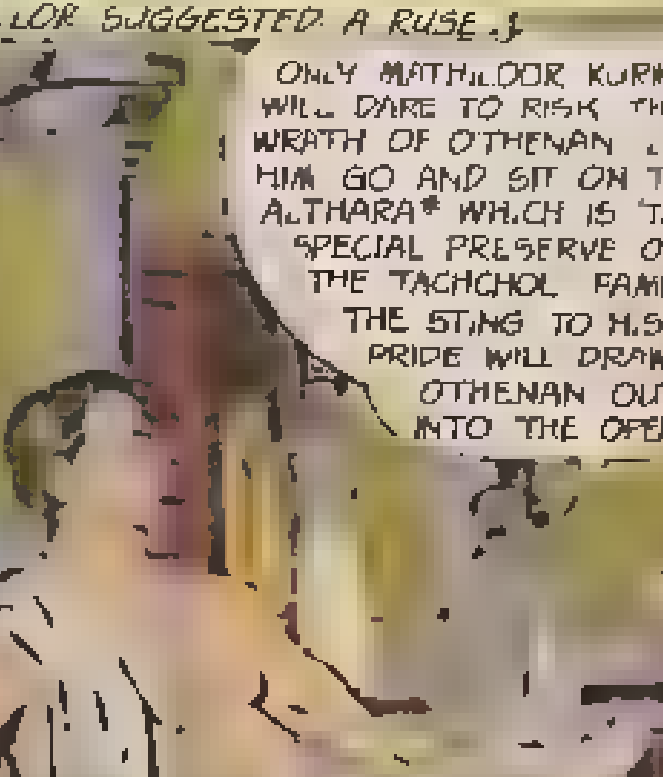
TO ASSIST THE TAMPURAN TO BRING THE
ELUSIVE OTHENAN TO COURT, A COUN-
SELLOR SUGGESTED A RUSE. }

ONLY MATHILOOR KURKKA
WILL DARE TO RISK THE
WRATH OF OTHENAN. LET
HIM GO AND SIT ON THE
ALTHARA* WHICH IS THE
SPECIAL PRESERVE OF
THE TACHCHOL FAMILY.
THE STING TO HIS
PRIDE WILL DRAW
OTHENAN OUT
INTO THE OPEN.



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OTHENAN OUT
INTO THE OPEN.



TO ASSIST THE TAMPURAN TO BRING THE
ELUSIVE OTHENAN TO COURT, A COUN-
SELLOR SUGGESTED A RUSE. }

ONLY MATHILOOR KURKKA
WILL DARE TO RISK THE
WRATH OF OTHENAN. LET
HIM GO AND SIT ON THE
ALTHARA* WHICH IS THE
SPECIAL PRESERVE OF
THE TACHCHOL FAMILY.
THE STING TO HIS
PRIDE WILL DRAW
OTHENAN OUT
INTO THE OPEN.

HE OCCUPIED THE SEAT, THE DISGUISED
OTHER MAN APPROACHED HIM.

THAT THIS IS IMPROPER. THERE IS NONE MAN
ENOUGH IN TACH-



CHAPLAIN

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AN INFURIATED
OTHENAN WENT
AND CHALLENGE
HIM!

AN INFURIATED
OTHENAN WENT
AND CHALLENGE
HIM!

KOMA KURUP CONFERRED WITH HIS FRIENDS.

WE MUST TAKE HONGAMMA TO THE TAMPURAM.



THE TAMIL JUDGES HUNG, HONGAMMA'S VERSION.

OTHERMAN DID NOT SEND ME OUT INTO THE FIELD HIS MOTHER DID. I WAS HOPING TO BE HIS WIFE

THE CHAIRMAN AGAINST HIM ARE DELETED. I SHALL TALK TO HIM ABOUT YOU



THE MAN'S MOTHER'S REPLY WAS AN INSULT TO HONGAMMA AND A HAPPY ONE - YET -

WHY ARE YOU BROODING?

THE KURIKKA'S INSULT TO OUR FAMILY GNAW AT MY VERY SOUL.



HE SOON GOT A CHANCE TO SETTLE THE SCORE. AT THE NEXT TEMPLE FESTIVAL -

TODAY WILL REMOVE HIM TO A DUEL.



DON'T YOU KNOW
THAT THIS IS THE
PLACE MEANT FOR
THE TAMMURANG
LANCE

I'M SORRY.
I'LL TAKE MY
GUN AWAY



OTHENAN WAS BENT ON MAKING
TROUBLE. HE PICKED THE GUN AND
EXAMINED IT

A FINE THING
INDEED! GOOD
FOR ONE OF
THE LOW CASTE
TO SHOOT
PEACOCKS
WITH



THE VILLAGE AT HIS CASTE, WHICH
SPECIALIZED IN EXTRACTING PEACOCK
OIL, KNEW THE KURIAKAI.

ALL RIGHT, OTHENAN.
I CHALLENGE YOU
TO A FIGHT. WE
WILL MEET AT
PONNIYAM.



KURIA KURUP WAS SAD AT THE TURN OF EVENTS

YOU SHOULD NOT
HAVE DONE THIS

I DID NOT CHALLENGE
HIM HE CHALLENGED
ME



ON THE APPOINTED DAY, OTHENAN'S F

ND5



I GO TO FIGHT M
TODAY. I SEEK THE
CEREMONIAL APPROVAL
OF THIS ASSEMBLY

ATTIRED FOR THE FIGHT, HE
STEPPED OUT AND STOPPED



THERE BEGAN THE DUEL THAT LASTED
THREE LONG DAYS.



LIKE ONE POSSESSED, OTHENAN

STARTLED MEN



A TRIUMPHANT OTHENAN AND HIS PARTY PROCEEDED TO TACHCHOLI. ON THE WAY —

I HAVE FORGOTTEN MY URUMI* AT PONNIYAM. I SHALL GO BACK FOR IT.

IT IS SAID THAT ONE SHOULD NEVER RETURN TO THE FIELD OF FIGHT.

OTHENAN AS USUAL WAS OBSTINATE. AS HE WAS PICKING UP HIS WEAPON —

IT WAS MAYAN A DISCIPLE OF MATHILDOOR KURIKKAL.

OTHENAN FLUNG HIS URUMI AT MAYAN AND KILLED HIM.

MY AMULET! "ALAS! I FAILED TO KEEP IT WITH ME."

THE BULLET HIT OTHENAN ON THE FOREHEAD.



* A LONG FLEXIBLE SWORD WORN AS A BELT. ** THE ONE GIVEN BY NAMAPPAN KURIKKAL.

MEANWHILE THE GUNSHOT BROUGHT CHANDU RUNNING TO THE SCENE.

I'LL GET A STRETCHER TO TAKE YOU HOME.

THAT WOULD BE A FINE TRIUMPHANT ENTRY FOR A FAMOUS WARRIOR! NO. THANK YOU, CHANDU. I'LL WALK.



SUSTAINED BY A BANDAGED HEAD, OTTHENAN STOPPED AT THE TEMPLE ON HIS WAY HOME.

LET 101 SHOTS ANNOUNCE MY ARRIVAL.

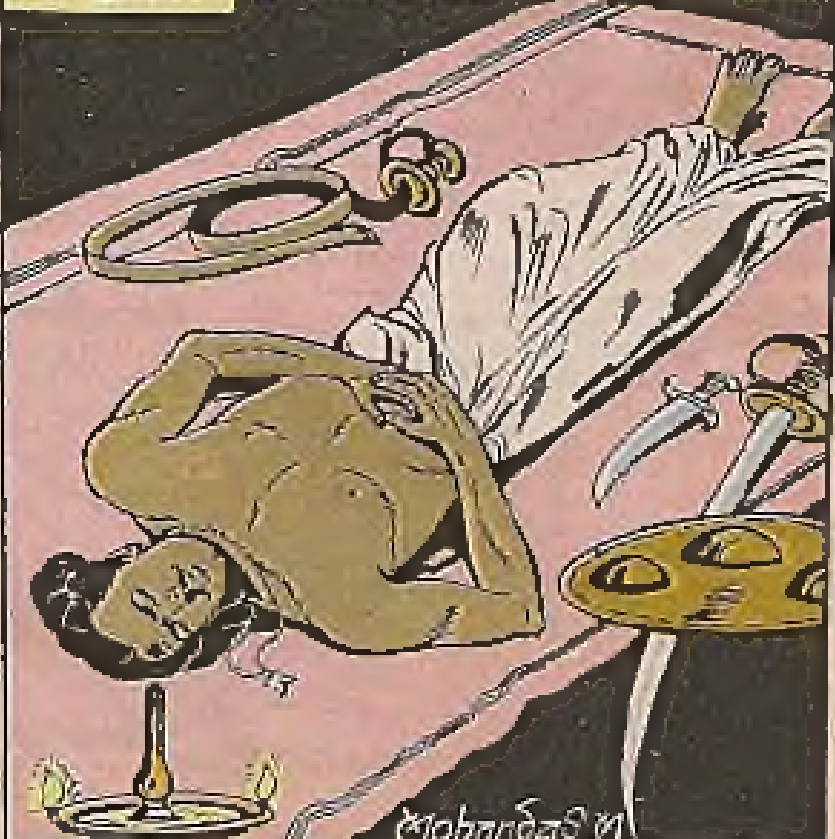


AT HOME HE GAVE HIS LAST INSTRUCTIONS TO KOMA KURUP.

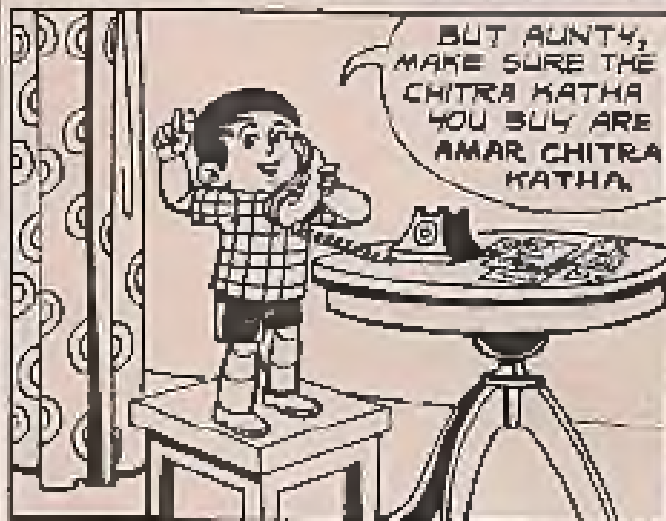
NOW I AM READY TO DIE. YOU MAY REMOVE THE BANDAGE.



THEN RESTING FLAT ON HIS BACK WITH HIS WEAPONS LAID OUT ON EITHER SIDE OF HIM, THE VALIANT OTTHENAN BREATHED HIS LAST.



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